



# **The US 231 Relocation Study Community Impact Assessment**

**Andy Vachet & Lorna Parkins, Michael Baker Jr., Inc.**  
September 10, 2003 CIA Regional Workshop



# Community Impact Assessment

- Provides technical information required by NEPA
- Is a more holistic and unified process of evaluating the effects of a transportation action on a community and its quality of life
- Uses data collected from community members and reflects the community's concerns to present a more thorough description of the predicted impacts to the human environment
- As directed by FHWA, CIAs should consider “both the benefits and burdens of the decisions.” (FHWA 2002)



# Community Impact Assessment





# Why a Community Advisory Committee for this Project?

- Demonstrated commitment to public participation.
- CAC members provided input related to community issues and certain aspects of project development to the project team.\*
- CAC members served as liaisons between the project team and the community, which increased public knowledge of the project.

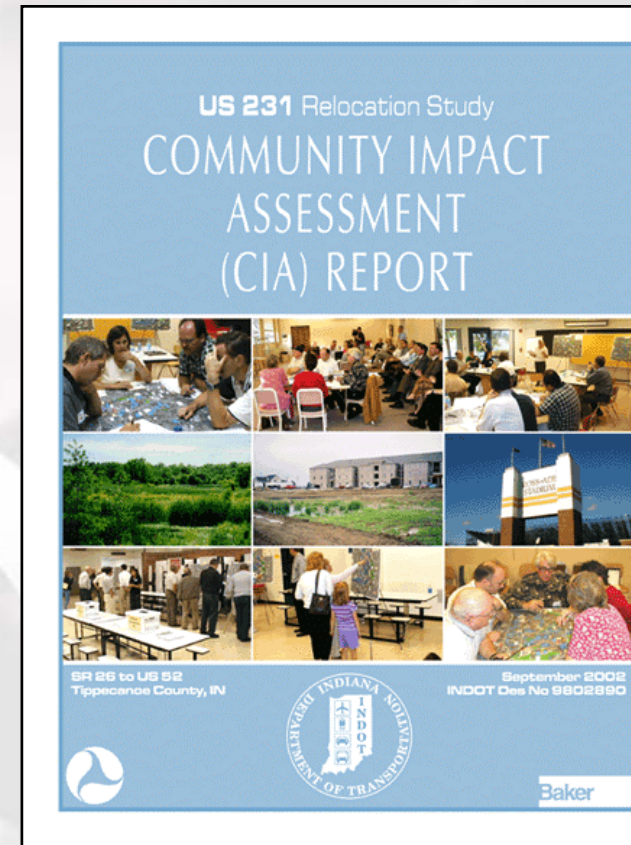
Although INDOT and FHWA maintained ultimate authority over decisions regarding the





# Community Impact Assessment

- Indiana's First CIA
- Community impacts are the primary project concern
- Very dynamic environment
- Able to use the CAC to provide detailed input





# CAC Member Selection

- Scoping meeting and stakeholder interviews were used to develop list of potential members
- Invitations and applications were sent out to various community representatives
- Website solicited volunteers to serve on the committee
- Interested individuals were required to complete an application to become a member of the committee
- 23 applications were submitted and accepted



# CAC Comprised of Diverse Viewpoints

Area Plan Commission of  
Tippecanoe County (MPO)  
City of West Lafayette  
Focus on the Future of  
Unincorporated Wabash Township  
Indiana Bicycle Coalition  
Indiana University Physical Facilities  
**Tippecanoe County:**  
Council Member  
Emergency Management  
Highway Department  
School Corporation  
Soil & Water Conservation District  
Session 2020

Wabash Civil Township  
Wabash River Cycle Club  
Wabash Valley Trust for Historic Preservation  
Wabash Township Farm Bureau  
Wabash Township Volunteer Fire Dept

## **Neighborhoods:**

Blackbird Farms Homeowners' Assn  
Carrington Estates/Pine Village  
Point West Mobile Home Park  
Sherwood Forest  
Sugar Hill  
Wake Robin





UNITY-ADVISORY-COMMITTEE - US 231 Relocation Study - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File View Favorites Tools Help

http://www.relocate231.com/cac.htm

# 231 Relocation Study

Tippecanoe County, Indiana

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news • history • project • links • public • feedback

## Community Advisory Committee

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) members serve as liaisons between the project team and the groups/organizations they represent, as well as the larger community. The CAC provides input on community issues and feedback on certain aspects of project development.

The CAC assists in the development of the Community Impact Assessment & Mitigation (CIA Report) portion of the US 231 Relocation Study.

The committee meets on an as-needed basis to solicit information back to their respective communities.

Although INDOT and FHWA will maintain ultimate authority over decisions regarding the project, the CAC serves an important advisory role.

### CAC Members

Click [here](#) to see the CAC members chosen to represent the communities within the study area for this project.

**\*\* Now that the project is heading into it's final stages, the CAC will no longer be open to additional membership.**

### CAC Meeting #2

The second CAC meeting was held May 16, 2002 at Klondike Middle School. You may view the meeting materials by clicking on the list at left.

Please keep in mind that this information is in DRAFT form and is preliminary information being presented to INDOT.

### Public Kickoff Meeting, April 11, 2002:

- Meeting Invitation (52 KB)
- Meeting Information Packet (339 KB)
- Maps:
  - Future & Existing Land Use
  - Preliminary Community Access

### Meeting #2, May 16, 2002:

- Meeting Invitation Letter (19 KB)
- Meeting Agenda (7 KB)
- Alternatives Analysis Presentation (531 KB)
- Section 106 (49 KB)
- Maps:
  - Alternatives Considered
  - Land Use
  - Natural Environment
  - Potential Section 4(f) Resources
  - Alternatives Carried Forward for Detailed Study
  - Wellhead Protection Areas

www.relocate231.com/project.htm

# 231 Relocation Study

Tippecanoe County, Indiana

As always, your comments on the project are welcome, as they help us understand how the relocation of US 231 could affect you.

Submit your comments to the project website: [www.relocate231.com/feedback.asp](http://www.relocate231.com/feedback.asp) or by mail:  
Wendy L. Vachet, Project Manager  
701 E. 83rd Avenue  
Merrillville, IN 46410

Stay informed - visit the project website at [www.relocate231.com](http://www.relocate231.com).

## Project Background

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), in association with the Federal Highway Administration is re-evaluating alternatives originally proposed as part of the 1987 environmental impact study for the relocation of US 231 from south of the Wabash River to US 52. That study was done in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In June 2001, the southern portion of the project, including the new bridge crossing the Wabash River as well as improvements to South River Road, were completed and opened for traffic. The planned middle portion between South River Road and State Street is currently undergoing final design by INDOT.

In June 2001, Michael Baker Jr., Inc. was provided official Notice to Proceed on preparing additional environmental documentation regarding the northern portion of the US 231 Relocation Project between State Road 26 (State Street) and US 52.

The northern portion of the project was planned to alleviate traffic congestion on the Purdue Campus by re-routing US 231 to the west. Several alternatives were studied as part of the 1987 study, and a preferred alternative was selected in a 1992 Record of Decision. However, significant developments west of the campus have necessitated that the original alternatives be re-evaluated. Therefore, INDOT is taking another look at the project to determine the best alternative to meet current needs while avoiding or minimizing environmental impacts to the area. ■

## Public Kickoff Meeting

The first public meeting was held on January 17, 2002 at Purdue University's Stewart Center. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the eight initial alternatives for the continuation of the US 231 Relocation Project between State Street (SR 26) and US 52. Over 275 people were in attendance to collect information relating to the project history, potential alternatives, and the NEPA process. A brief presentation was given by Wendy Vachet (Project Manager for INDOT's project consultant, Michael Baker Jr., Inc.), about the history of the project and the current study, after which individual comments were heard. Comment sheets were included in the meeting handout packet for written questions and comments. The results of comments received thus far are included in this newsletter. Comments will be accepted throughout the life of the project via the project website ([www.relocate231.com](http://www.relocate231.com)) or mail (see newsletter return address). ■



Wendy Vachet speaks to the crowd of over 275 in attendance for the Public Kickoff Meeting.

## Upcoming Public Meeting

The second public meeting will be held on June 6, 2002 from 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. in the cafeteria of Klondike Middle School (3307 Klondike Road, West Lafayette). The first hour will be an open house during which attendees may review aerial maps of the study area including several potential alignments for the proposed road. From 6:30 - 7:30, representatives of INDOT's project consultant, Michael Baker Jr., Inc., will provide a presentation about the status of the overall project and the results of the preliminary alternative analysis and historic architectural resources within the project study area. The role and activities of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) will also be presented. During the third hour, residents will be allowed to present comments about the project, and additional time may be spent reviewing the maps and other materials presented. ■

## Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

The CAC is a group of citizens and representatives of several local community and neighborhood groups established by INDOT to act as an informational liaison between the community and transportation officials. CAC members have participated in workshops designed to assist in the evaluation of potential social, economic and environmental impacts of the proposed road. The Indiana Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration maintain final authority and responsibility concerning decision-making regarding the project; however, the CAC serves in an important advisory role. Information from the CAC workshops will be used to develop a Community Impact Assessment Report for the project. *Continued on reverse.*





# Information Collected at CAC Meetings

## Meeting 1:

- Project overview & role of the CAC
- NEPA and Community Impact Assessment
- Exercise: Identify Community Impact Issues
- Newsletter Development
- Selection of CAC Spokesperson & Assistant

## Meeting 2:

- Preliminary Alternatives Analysis & GIS Demo
- Section 106 / Historic & Cultural Resources
- The “Other” US 231 Study (Corradino Group)

## Meeting 3:

- Review CAC Info Packet sent via mail (Purpose & Need, Alternatives Reduction Analysis, Traffic Report Synopsis, CIA Exercise, Community Impact Analysis)
- Exercise: Identify Neighborhood Impacts



# Information Collected at CAC Meetings

## Meeting 4:

- Envision the project after construction & suggest design/mitigation measures
- Recommended Preferred Alternative Presentation

## Meeting 5:

- Report on the final mitigation and CSS commitments
- Evaluation of the CAC

## Subsequent CAC Meetings:

- Continuation of the CAC into design to ensure Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) elements really happen

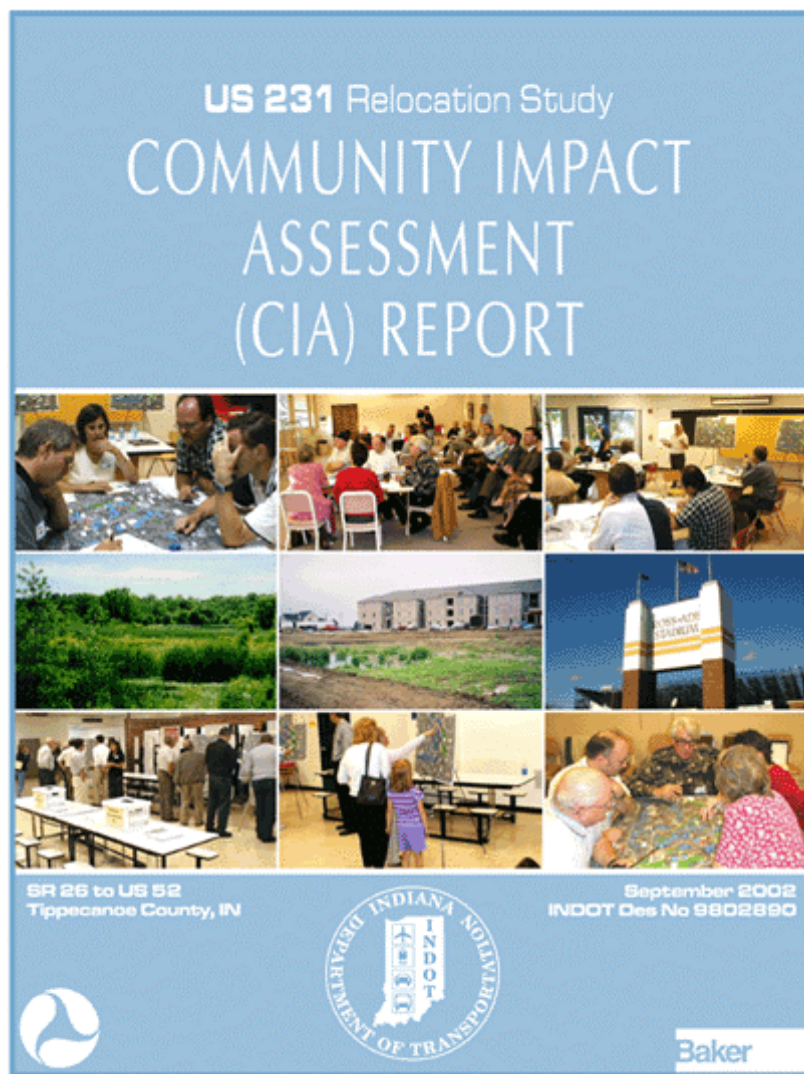
Matrix of Community Impacts - LINE 4

LINE 4 Interaction	NEIGHBORHOOD					Non-Neighborhood Specific Impacts
	Lindberg Village	Sherwood Forest	Wake Robin	Kerfoot Drive	Other (specify)	
type of direct caused by Line 4 (e.g., noise, vibration, air quality, traffic, bisection)						
travel patterns						
Line 4 alter daily travel patterns?						
Line 4 alter bicycle and pedestrian travel patterns?						
concerns						
level of community concern						
impact on community						
concerns and mitigation actions*						
change in community cohesion (e.g., high, negative or low, negative low, positive)						

\* 1) Baker will provide detailed noise impact analysis in the environmental document, and 2) construction period impacts will be addressed during final design, maintenance of traffic and mitigation of construction-period nuisances. We plan to discuss mitigation relative to these two subjects at the fourth CAC meeting.



# The CIA Report



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# Lessons Learned

- Great ideas from CAC
- Inserted us into the community
- Made the study team accountable
- Momentum from a tight schedule
- Required tremendous discipline and adaptability
- Exposed, yet added credibility, to the transportation planning process
- CIA & Public Involvement, along with CSS, go hand in hand
- CSS part of final product made all the difference in CAC and community acceptance

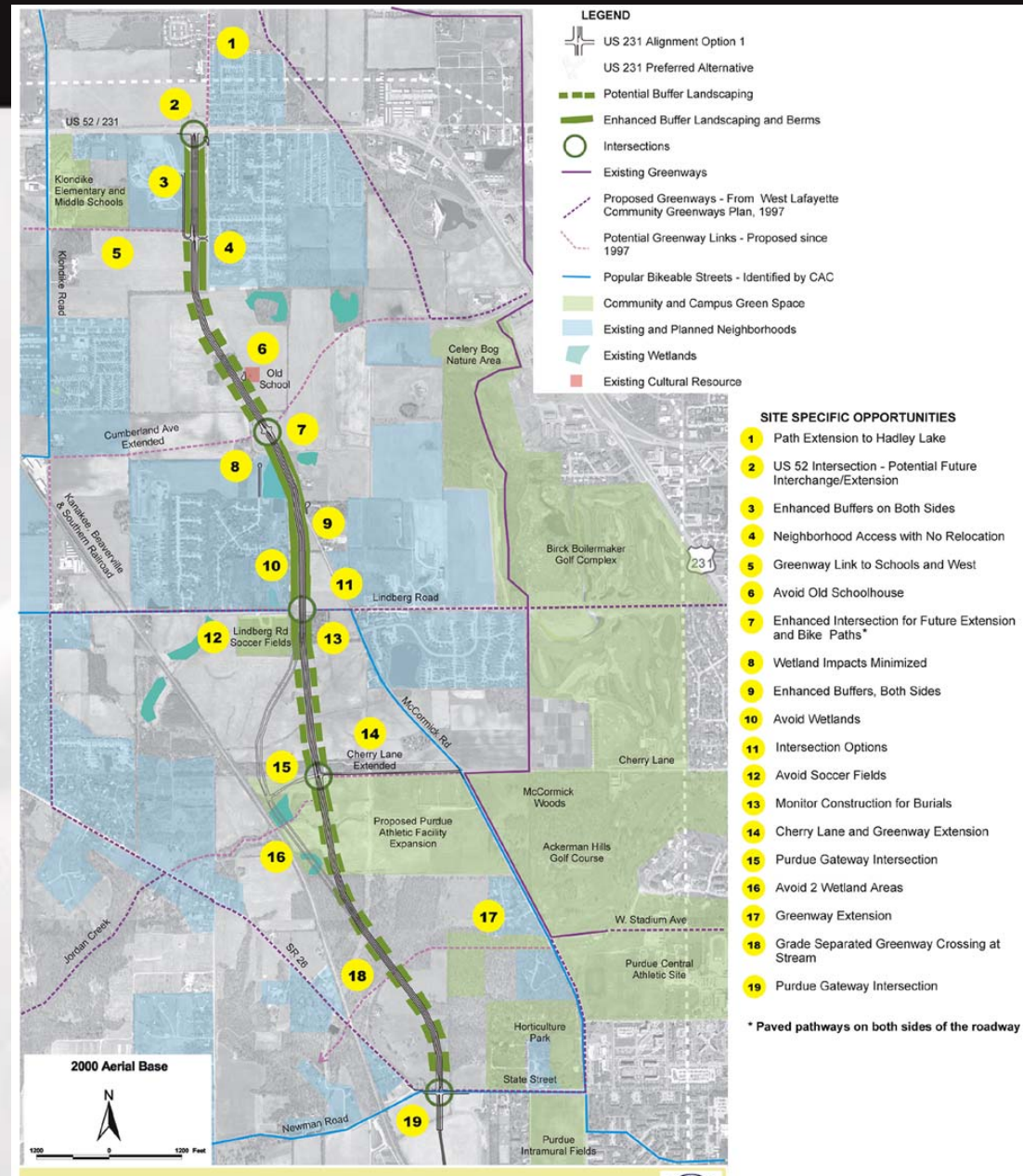




# Commitments Made from INDOT

Uphold the CSS elements of the project (documented in the FONSI and Engineer's Report)

Ensure the continuation of the CAC into design to make sure the CSS really happen







# Comments from CAC Members

*The meeting was informative and worthwhile. . . It was important for me to hear from Baker and INDO that CAC input for evaluating alternatives is sought and valued."*

*"I was pleased to get the opportunity for meaningful input during the meeting. As many people also indicated, I had felt that the CAC input would be minimal for the whole project. I hope that we were able to provide you with information not otherwise available to you."*

*"Many of us were impressed with the attempts of the consultants to make this process as open as possible. We were given substantial information about the project and what is necessary to get the road built.. . . I have been observing the political process in this county for about 30 years now, and this appears to be the most open, public forum on an issue which will affect our community. "*

*"I feel the group made a large impact. I think the continued involvement of the group with the engineers is extremely important."*

*"This project will be better accepted by the Township residents because of the CAC."*



# The Reality

- Public confusion about NEPA and the Transportation Planning Process is a reality that CIA alone cannot fix
- A fine line exists between CIA and Public Involvement and in fact, this may be more of a challenge to the planner than the public
- The Transportation Planning process can become a “lightning rod” for other local issues such as landuse planning
- **You cannot make everyone happy - CIA is not about convincing the public that the right decision has been made; its about getting the best information**



# What To Do Differently

- Set a solid Code of Conduct/Ground Rules at CAC meetings and STICK TO THEM
- Address an issue at CAC meetings and move on - better manage debatable topics (i.e. Traffic Modeling)
- Better engage CAC members in the overall process; ask them to assist at public hearings (work the sign-in table, man a CAC booth)





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